

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 CANBER 00895 050725Z

20

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15

OMB-01 OFA-01 INT-05 EB-07 COME-00 /092 W

----- 059305

R 050558Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7435

INFO AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

UNCLAS CANBERRA 895

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, AS, FY, XO

SUBJ: FRENCH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS,

DESTREMAU REMARKS ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

1. THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED IN THE CANBERRA TIMES
ON FEBRUARY 5:

2. QTE. AFRICA MUST BE PROTECTED FROM THE EXCESSIVE IN-
FLUENCE OF EITHER OF THE SUPER POWERS AND THIS WAS PART
OF THE REASON FOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF FRENCH NAVL FORCES
INTO THE INDIAN OCEAN, THE FRENCH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MR. BERNARD DESTREMAU, SAID IN CANBERRA
YESTERDAY.

3. QTE. THE FRENCH MINISTER, THE FIRST TO VISIT AUSTRALIA
SINCE 1972, SAID THE INDIAN OCEAN WAS INCLUDED IN HIS
DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. FRASER, AND THE
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MR. PEACOCK.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 CANBER 00895 050725Z

4. QTE. ASKED IF FRENCH ASSESSMENTS OF THE SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AND PARTICULARLY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOVIET NAVL BASE AT BERBERA, SOMALIA, WOULD BE CLOSER TO THOSE OF THE UNITED STATES THAN THOSE OF INDIA, MR. DESTREMAU SAID FRANCE HAD ITS OWN VIEWS ON THE MATTER.

5. QTE. INNER QTE. WER ARE ALWAYS A LITTLE WORRIED WHEN AN AREA OF THE WORLD BECOMES THE PLACE FOR COMPETITION BETWEEN THE SUPER POWERS, END INNER QTE HE SAID. INNER QTE WE DO NOT LIKE IT AND WE THINK WE HAVE TO HAVE A LOOK AT THE INDIAN OCEAN SITUATION.

6. QTE INNER QTE WE DO NOT HAVE TO ISSUE JUDGMENTS ABOUT WHAT THE SOVIET UNION OR THE UNITED STATES DO. WE HAVE SENT A FEW WARSHIPS BECAUSE WE HAVE INTERESTS IN AFRICA. BUT OUR SHIPS ARE NOT TO ASSIST ONE SUPER POWER OR THE OTHER. END INNER QTE.

7. QTE. ABOUT 8 PERCENT OF FRANCE'S WARSHIPS WERE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, HE DISCLOSED.

8. QTE. THERE WERE A LOT OF SOVIET WARSHIPS AND FISH-ING BOATS THERE.

9. QTE. INNER QTE WE ARE A LITTLE WORRIED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES OF TENSION IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD, END INNER QTE HE SAID.

10. QTE MR. DESTREMAU DECLINED TO BE DRAWN INTO OPPOSITION TO THE US NAVAL FACILITY BEING BUILT ON THE ISLAND OF DIEGO GARCIA. FRANCE WAS NOT INVOLVED AND HAD NOT BEEN ASKED FOR ITS VIEWS. THE FRENCH NAVY HAD FACILITIES AT DJIBOUTI AND OTHER HARBOURS IN AFRICA IN THE INDIAN AND ATLANTIC OCEANS.

11. QTE. SOME GOVERNMENTS DID NOT LIKE THE FRENCH PRESENCE AT DJIBOUTI AND WERE AFRAID OF CONFLICT BETWEEN ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA, BUT FRANCE THOUGHT IT NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN THE PRESENCE.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 CANBER 00895 050725Z

12. QTE. FRANCE ALSO HAD INTERESTS IN TRADE THROUGH THE OCEAN AND THE FREEDOM OF THE HIGH SEAS WAS VERY MUCH INVOLVED IN THE ISSUE.

13. QTE. MR. DESTREMAU' ESTIMATE OF ABOUT EIGHT PER CENT OF THE FRENCH FLEET IN THE INDIAN OCEAN WOULD PLACE ITS NUMBERS HIGHER THAN GENERALLY ESTIMATED BY

WESTERN OBSERVERS.

14. QTE. EXCLUDING NUCLEAR SUBMARINES, FRANCE HAS NEARLY 100 WARSHIPS RANGING UPWARD FROM CORVETTES TO AIRCRAFT CARRIERS. OF THE MAJOR UNITS, MOST ARE ARMED WITH ANTI-AIR, ANTI-SHIP AND ANTI-SUBMARINE MISSILES OF FRENCH MANUFACTURE AND PROBABLY THE EQUAL OF THE TYPES OF EQUIPMENT DEPLOYED BY THEIR SOVIET COUNTERPARTS.

15. QTE. IF THE EIGHT PER CENT FIGURE IS A RELATIVELY CONSTANT DEPLOYMENT, THE FRENCH PRESENCE IS MUCH LARGER THAN THE USUAL US DETACHMENT OF TWO DESTROYERS BASED ON BAHREIN WITH OCCASIONAL VISITS FROM PACIFIC UNITS.

16. QTE. BUT MR. DESTREMAU'S EMPHASIS ON THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE FRENCH OPERATION MADE IT CLEAR THAT FRANCE AT LEAST DOES NOT REGARD THE ROUGH BALANCE OF SOVIET AND WESTERN FORCES ACHIEVED BY TOTALLING THE FRENCH, US, BRITISH AND OTHER WESTERN-ALIGNED UNITS IN THE AREA AGAINST THOSE OF THE RUSSIANS.

17. QTE. MR. DESTREMAU DISCLOSED ALSO THAT THE MATTER OF THE OCEAN HAD NOT BEEN RAISED IN HIS RECENT TALKS WITH INDIAN OFFICIALS IN NEW DELHI. THE FRENCH HAD NOT OPENED SUCH A DISCUSSION BECAUSE THEY WERE THE GUESTS OF THE INDIANS.
END QTE.
PERCIVAL

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, MILITARY BUILDUP, NAVAL FORCES, MILITARY PLANS, MINISTERIAL MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976CANBER00895
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760043-0965
From: CANBERRA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760280/aaaacsgk.tel
Line Count: 142
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 JUN 2004 by BrownAM>; APPROVED <15 DEC 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRENCH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DESTREMAU REMARKS ON THE INDIAN OCEAN
TAGS: PFOR, AS, FR, XO, (DESTREMAU, BERNARD)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006